

October 27, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Office of the Speaker  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515  
The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
Office of the Majority Leader  
H-107, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Hoyer:

As the health care reform process enters its final critical phase, we encourage you to give the fullest possible consideration to provisions which promote portability and additional competition throughout the private health insurance market.

As members of the New Democrat Coalition, we are concerned that the current system of state health insurance regulations is barring entry to new private insurance choices and preventing portability of plans across state lines. With an uncertain job market and an increasingly mobile American workforce, we in Congress need to ensure that states and private insurers are given incentives to promote consistency and reliability both for individuals moving from state to state, and for individuals looking for more affordable health coverage in the state where they reside.

President Obama made a pledge to the American people that health care reform will ensure all citizens' access to affordable health insurance options regardless of health status, employment, or where they live. It is essential that we deliver on that pledge by creating true portability of health insurance coverage, and allowing private insurance companies to offer new products with uniform benefits and prices to consumers in multiple states, thereby enhancing competition in the private insurance market. If tied to a universal set of federal benefit guidelines and consumer protections, such an idea would allow businesses in our communities greater flexibility and simplicity in offering coverage to workers, while the increased competition among insurers would drive down costs for employers and workers alike.

To further enhance competition and choice, we also strongly encourage allowing states to form voluntary "regional compacts" and insurance companies to offer national products, which would expand the insurance choices available to the American public. With the creation of such compacts, an insurer licensed in one state could offer and sell a plan to individuals in any other participating state and would be subject only to the benefits-related regulations of the state where the coverage is issued. States where the plan-holders reside would retain authority to address unfair trade practices, network

adequacy and consumer protection standards even if the insurer is not already licensed in that state. A similar idea was included as part of the Senate Finance Committee's health reform legislation.

We very much hope you will consider including provisions that will allow insurance companies to offer new products with uniform benefits and prices in multiple states and allow states to join regional compacts in the final version of health reform legislation considered by the House.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns and your leadership in the health care debate.

Sincerely yours,

Rep. Melissa Bean

Rep. Jim Himes

Rep. Scott Murphy

Rep. Bill Foster

Rep. Adam Smith

Rep. Kurt Schrader

Rep. Kendrick Meek

Rep. Dennis Moore

Rep. Ron Kind

Rep. Debbie Halvorson

Rep. Adam Schiff

Rep. Vic Snyder

Rep. Shelley Berkley

Rep. Ed Perlmutter

Rep. Chris Carney

Rep. Gary Peters

Rep. Alan Grayson

Rep. Michael McMahon

Rep. Jared Polis

Rep. Frank Kratovil, Jr.